

VZCZCXRO3088
OO RUEHDE RUEHROV RUEHTRO
DE RUEHDS #2265/01 2311435
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
O 181435Z AUG 08
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1730
INFO RUCNSOM/SOMALIA COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE IMMEDIATE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEPADJ/CJTF HOA IMMEDIATE
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 ADDIS ABABA 002265

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/18/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SO](#) [ET](#)

SUBJECT: GOE SUMMONS TFG, TFG LEADERS REMAIN ENTRENCHED

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, a.i. Deborah Malac for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

SUMMARY

¶1. (S) Despite clear and stern messages from the Ethiopian Government (GoE) to resolve personality conflicts and move on with governance and reconciliation, Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG) President Yusuf and Prime Minister Nur (Adde) Hassan Hussein remained entrenched in their respective positions in back-to-back discussions with the Charge on August 16. Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles and Foreign Minister Seyoum reportedly told Yusuf on August 15 that the lack of TFG progress had convinced Ethiopia to pull its forces out of Somalia and only TFG re-engagement to build national institutions would delay the timeline for such action. The Foreign Ministry reported on August 18 that the GoE will not again meet with the TFG leaders until they present either 1) a decision that they fundamentally disagree with one another, or 2) agreement to work together to develop a roadmap with a specific timeline for achievement of targeted objectives. Should Nur Adde and Yusuf take the first option, Ethiopia will inform them of its immediate withdrawal. If/when the TFG decides to work together, the GoE will work with them to develop the timeline and call on the U.S. and European partners to establish a mechanism to monitor progress along the roadmap. Despite the planned August 18 commencement of talks in Djibouti, the GoE will not let Yusuf or Nur Adde leave until they have reached an agreement, arguing that without a TFG, the Djibouti process is meaningless.

¶2. (C) Prime Minister Nur Adde emphasized to Charge that President Yusuf's interventions with Ministers and in the details of the TFG government impeded progress. Nur Adde welcomed a no confidence vote against his government as a failed no confidence vote would give his government a six-month reprieve before another such vote could be presented. Yusuf, however, came across as combative and adamant in his position, showing no evidence of the stern message he had reportedly received from Meles. Yusuf argued that he was the driver behind all Somali reconciliation efforts over the past 17 years and that the current crisis is a constitutional challenge. Belittling the Prime Minister, Yusuf showed no evidence of a willingness to cooperate with Nur Adde. Still, Yusuf emphasized that the continued U.S. support for the TFG is "absolutely necessary." Charge made clear to both Yusuf and Nur Adde that the current political crisis distracts from progress by the TFG and undermines USG efforts to garner greater support for the TFG within the U.S., at the UN, or in the international community. Yusuf's insistence on continued U.S. support, however, exposes the

leverage point that the United States can use over the President to convince him to resolve the current crisis. End Summary.

A MESSAGE FROM THE ETHIOPIANS

13. (S) The Foreign Minister's Chief of Staff Abdeta Dribssa informed PolChief on August 16 that Meles and Seyoum met Yusuf on August 15. In that meeting, Meles reportedly expressed the GoE's clear disappointment with Yusuf and the TFG's lack of progress on reconciliation and governance due to persistent internal squabbling over personalities. Meles reportedly told Yusuf that Ethiopia had decided to withdraw from Somalia. Abdeta noted that the statement was not a threat or ultimatum, but a statement of the GoE's decision. Meles reportedly told Yusuf that the timetable for Ethiopia's withdrawal could be determined by the TFG's progress on building institutions, but that the decision to withdraw was final. Meles reportedly assured a shaken Yusuf that if security and the TFG are inadequate at the time of Ethiopia's withdrawal, the Ethiopians would drop Yusuf in Galcaiyo on the way out.

14. (S) In a follow-on discussion on August 18, Abdeta noted that three days after meeting Meles, Yusuf remained just as entrenched. Abdeta noted that the GoE would not engage the TFG leaders until they inform the GoE that they cannot work together -- in which case the GoE would inform them of its immediate withdrawal -- or until they present an agreement to collaborate to move Somalia forward. With the TFG leaders in

ADDIS ABAB 00002265 002 OF 003

Addis on the GoE's insistence, Abdeta noted that "we won't let them go until they reach a decision." Abdeta was clear that Ethiopia will not let Yusuf dismiss another government. If Yusuf agrees to work together with Nur Adde, Ethiopia will insist that the TFG leaders establish a roadmap with a timeline for the achievement of targeted objectives over the remainder of the transitional period. If such happens, Foreign Minister Seyoum will call on his counterparts in the U.S., UK, and France to establish a mechanism through which the international community could monitor progress along the roadmap. The roadmap should focus first on establishing a functional Benadir administration without Dheere, then on an administration for the Lower Juba region, and then similar administrations elsewhere. Abdeta was adamant that "Ethiopia will not accept allowing Dheere to stay" as he is "working against Ethiopia's interests." Abdeta noted that Ethiopia would look to the international community to support financially the roadmap process, once established.

15. (S) For the first time, Abdeta made clear that should Yusuf abandon the TFG process or be impeached by the Parliament, Ethiopia will pull back its forces to Baidoa and work to pick up the pieces of the TFG and Somalia. Abdeta was clear that Ethiopia's security requires its sustained presence and support in Somalia.

NUR ADDE: A NO CONFIDENCE VOTE GIVES ME SIX MONTHS

16. (C) Following the initial MFA read-out, Charge and PolChief met TFG Prime Minister Nur Adde on August 16. The Prime Minister reported that while Meles and Seyoum had met Yusuf on August 15, Ethiopian State Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Tekeda Alemu and Ethiopia's only Somali cabinet member Mohammed Dirir met Nur Adde and the TFG Parliamentary Speaker on the morning of August 16 to discuss the way forward. Nur Adde argued that the current crisis over the fate of Mogadishu mayor Mohammed Dheere was just the latest in a persistent string of issues in which President Yusuf has undermined the Somali government by intervening in the details of developments, giving orders directly to different ministers without informing or consulting the Prime Minister, and micro-managing the armed and security forces without

allowing them to report to the Prime Minister. Nur Adde argued that Dheere had lost all public support and as people continue to see the president allied with Dheere, the people will increasingly turn against the president, to the detriment of the entire TFG.

17. (C) Nur Adde welcomed the prospect of a no confidence vote by the Parliament. He argued that if they vote him out, he will leave. But, if they do not vote him out, Parliament cannot bring another no confidence vote against his government for another six months -- thus allowing his government time to progress with reconciliation and governance. The Prime Minister did not advocate for the expulsion or impeachment of the President, only for him to stop intervening in the micromanagement of the government and undermining of the Prime Minister.

YUSUF: I'M ALL ABOUT RECONCILIATION AND SOMALIA C'EST MOI

18. (S) In contrast, President Yusuf presented himself to Charge as unwilling to listen or yield to any other Somali leader. The Charge was explicit that the current, and persistent, personality feuds within the TFG distract the TFG from the urgent work needed to be done and undermine efforts by the United States to support the TFG domestically, at the United Nations, and internationally. Unwilling to hear the criticism, Yusuf dismissed the row over the firing of Dheere as a breach of the Charter by the Prime Minister and tried to emphasize his own commitment to reconciliation. Through a 15 minute diatribe, Yusuf presented himself as the driving force behind last year's reconciliation congress, provisions for reconciliation in the Charter, and as a critical factor in all 14 previous attempts at establishing a Somali government.

19. (C) After Charge again stressed how persistent TFG political crises undermine efforts by TFG supporters, including the U.S., to garner additional support for his government, Yusuf was explicit that continued U.S. support for the TFG is "absolutely necessary." The President argued

ADDIS ABAB 00002265 003 OF 003

that "if the U.S. supports me now, there will be no more terrorism in the Horn of Africa," but he quickly noted concern about whether the USG would shift its focus away from counterterrorism after the November U.S. elections. After the Charge noted that moving forward is the only option for the TFG as the GoE will be withdrawing, Yusuf re-echoed the TFG's need for U.S. support. With his next breath, however, he demonstrated his disdain for the Prime Minister asking rhetorically whether the Charge was certain that the Prime Minister had not lied in his meeting and "is he black, or is he white?" (Note: Sources report that Somalis believe that white people are former Somalis who god has damned. End Note.) Yusuf punctuated his contempt for Nur Adde with "...or is he yellow?"

DJIBOUTI PROCESS: FOCUS ON THE TFG AND DON'T BOLSTER THE ARS

110. (C) Post inquired with the Foreign Ministry on the absence of TFG leaders from the peace talks launched August 18 in Djibouti. Abdeta made clear that in light of the current TFG crisis, it is more important to shore up the TFG now than to move forward with the Djibouti process. If the TFG falters, Abdeta argued, the Djibouti process is meaningless. Conveying a message from the Foreign Minister, Abdeta advised Post to watch the Djibouti process closely with an eye on the implications and security considerations of the agenda. Abdeta specifically noted that the Somali opposition views the TFG as weak and will be jockeying to take advantage of this situation to establish its own territory. Abdeta specifically noted that provisions in the Djibouti process for the separation of forces effectively would establish a territory solely controlled by Somali

forces, from where they can again confront TFG forces during these times of weakness. In the meantime, Ethiopia's focus is on stabilizing the TFG and re-focusing them on progress.

MALAC